

Application Serial No.: 09/926,296
Reply to Office Action dated August 25, 2004

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 13-22 are presently active in this case.

Claims 13-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Niwa (U.S. Patent No. 6,475,606). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipatory rejection.

The Niwa reference was filed in the United States on January 22, 2001, and published on November 22, 2001, as U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2001/0044015 A1. The present application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. 119 to JP 2000-30896, which was filed on February 8, 2000. The Applicants are submitting concurrently herewith a certified English translation of the priority document (JP 2000-30896), thereby perfecting priority and overcoming the Niwa reference (see MPEP 201.15), which has a U.S. filing date later than the foreign priority filing date of the present application.

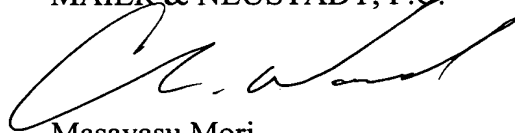
Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection.

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Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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